

May 28, three sets of 4 eggs each. Incubated. Fresh.
 " 29, four " " 4 " " 2 " 2 (slightly)
 " 30, one " " 3 " " " "

June 8th I again visited this locality and found and examined seven nests of these birds that had built and completed second sets, and nests, on the same tree, or in the immediate vicinity. Not any were over twenty-five yards from the site of the first nest. Six contained four eggs each, and one, three; three sets appeared to be slightly incubated and four were fresh. Time between taking the first sets and the building of new nests and completion of second sets, is as follows: In three (first) eleven days; in three (second) ten days; in one (third) nine days. The latter being the nest taken May 30 and containing but three eggs might not have been completed, although the first set of this pair contained but three. These second nests appeared to be more hastily built and contained less material than the first nests, and were generally built nearer the ground than the first nests.

J. N. CLARK, *Meridian, Wis.*

THE WORK FOR 1897.

Members should bear in mind that there are three committees at work upon the warblers, each one desiring material from all sources for their final report: The "Migrations" are under the direction of Mr. J. E. Dickinson, 1122 S. Winnebago street, Rockford, Ill. "Nesting" is under the direction of Mr. H. C. Higgins, Cincinnati, N. Y. "Food" and "Song" under the direction of Lynds Jones, Oberlin, Ohio. Besides these committees there are others. Mr. Frank L. Burns, Berwyn, Pa., asks for notes on the *Plicker*; Mr. Howard P. Mitchell, Mt. Sterling, Wis., for notes about *Nestling Down*; Mr. Stephen J. Adams, Cornish, Me., for notes relating to the habits of the *Swallows*; and Mr. W. L. Dawson, Oberlin, Ohio, outlines the proposed work on *Geographical Distribution* in another place in this BULLETIN. Let these committees have your hearty cooperation in all of their proposed investigations.

COMMITTEE ON GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF BIRDS.

The study of geography, like charity, should begin at home. Hence what I shall have to say by way of suggestion in outlining methods and

work will refer only to that which can be done in the garden, the orchard, and by the hedge, or on the occasional "day off." It is because we believe that there is no more fascinating or profitable nature study than that concerning the geographical distribution of animal life that we ask ourselves if there is not a necessary and important work which we may begin where we are. Birds, on account of their almost universal distribution and widespread movements, as well as for the reason that all the species in one locality can be learned and kept readily in mind, afford an ideal field for the investigation of the problems of specific variations, inherited traits and the influence of and accommodation to climatal and geographical changes.

Without proposing at present any elaborate scheme of co-operation among the members of the W. O. C., I wish to recommend for preliminary work two simple tasks, which, if undertaken and faithfully carried out will lay good foundation for fuller work. The first is what I should call the taking of *daily horizons*. That is, when you are in the field make a note of all the species seen, however common, and preserve these for future comparison. It will be a surprise to some to find how many species of birds may be seen on a little early-morning-before-breakfast ramble. Simple recording, however mechanical it may seem at first, will stimulate the powers of observation to a wonderful degree. I may instance sample "bags," or horizons, taken here at Oberlin this past winter and spring. On the 13th of February last Mr. Lynds Jones and I took a trip to the lake shore and found 18 species of birds—not of course counting such vermin as English Sparrows. By the first of April the number of resident and migrating species to be found on a day's tramp had reached 37. While by the 29th of the same month, between the hours of 4:30 and 6:30 A. M., we saw 55 species of birds in town and in a neighboring wood. The best horizon of the season was taken on the forenoon of May 10th, when we found 76 species of birds present, including 18 kinds of warblers.

In connection with this Mr. Jones has an excellent scheme in a pass-book of quadrille-ruled paper. In this he enters every bird as it appears each year and allows a space, or square, for each day throughout the remainder of the season. When returning from a morning ramble he enters the number seen after each species, however common. In this way, by glancing over the pages, the exact dates of arrival and departure of any given bird may be easily noted.

Another plan and one requiring a little more consecutive attention is the taking of the *bird census* for a given locality. Such expressions as,

"common", "tolerably common", "abundant", "rare", etc., which we constantly meet with, do not tell the story. To get any adequate conception of the various relations of different genera and species throughout the country we need to make an approximate estimate of their numerical relations based on reliable data from different localities. Lay out a given section, however small, a pasture, a swamp-plot, or an orchard and count the exact number of each species you find present at a certain time. It is evident that by laying meadow to pasture and swamp to copse one may obtain a fairly accurate estimate of the bird population.

These two plans are submitted to the Chapter as forming the present work of the Committee on geographical distribution. The first must necessarily be continued for a term of years to be of more than individual value, but it is believed that it will, as a skeleton or framework of field observations, provoke a discriminating interest in the birds afield, which alone would be worth the trouble, and that if carried on it will afford useful material for correlation papers.

The second plan is evidently available for immediate service although publications cannot be undertaken until some considerable number of censuses have come in. All those who are willing to undertake this work are asked to submit their results to the chairman of the Committee for correlation and ultimate publication. W. L. DAWSON, *Oberlin, O.*

EDITORIAL.

When does the Whippoorwill arrive at your station? When does the Purple Martin arrive at your station? This information is earnestly desired from every member so that a record of the movements can be made, and the controversy over earliest arrivals settled. Write your earliest records for these two species on a postal card and mail to the editor at once. The records of previous years would also be welcome.

We gladly note the growing success of the new ornithological art periodical, "*Birds*," published by the Nature Study Publishing Company of Chicago. It has come to fill a want long felt and gives promise of being able both to interest the uninitiated and to delight the professed votaries of the birds. Each month a varied assortment of mounted bird groups from all climes is reproduced in colors, and every plate is accompanied by a simple descriptive text, together with a short talk to the children purporting to be by the bird itself.

Numbers 1-4 of the monthly have appeared, and while all the plates